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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

ENGLISH NURSING POLITICS

Even the fact that it is not polite to criticise our Allies in time of war, cannot prevent us from condemning in unmeasured terms the simply abominable fashion in which certain elements in Great Britain torment, harass and humiliate the fine body of English trained nurses to whom all England owes so great a debt of respect and fairness—notice that we do not say gratitude, but respect.

That odious element, combined of patronizing, charity-mongering, undemocratic bossism, which has been the affliction of British nurses for thirty years, is still busy trying to enslave them in a web wherein the College of Nursing, State Registration, and public alms are woven with the intent to keep them professionally helpless.

The *British Journal of Nursing* for December 1 says, editorially:

The British Women's Hospital Committee * * * was formed to help the nation's sick and wounded * * * In an evil hour for the nursing profession . * * * the Hon. Treasurer and Chairman of the Advisory Committee became obsessed with the idea of including the nursing profession in their charitable schemes, having been invited to ask alms from the public in behalf of the Endowment and Benefit Funds of the College of Nursing. At first no doubt these ladies were ignorant of the fact that trained nurses are a self-respecting and self-supporting professional class and that their self-governing organizations are strongly opposed to the autocratic constitution of the College Company, composed as it is entirely of laymen, and of many reactionary officials of hospitals, whom they have nominated to govern the rank and file without their consent.

The editorial then goes on to show that the true conditions involving the educational and economic affairs of nurses were clearly set forth to the British Women's Hospital Committee by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, president of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, and that for a time the protest of nurses seemed to impress the women, but that later it was decided "to ignore the views of the workers and appeal for charity upon their behalf in support of the Employers' Company." Following this, a press boycott toward the nurses ensued, and they could not get their views into any of the London papers, which carried columns of most objectionable begging advertisements. The *British Journal of Nursing* concludes its editorial thus:

The charitable public has a right to know facts which the subsidised press has suppressed: (1) That trained nurses object to alms, and to the patronage

of society women; (2) that the tyrannical constitution of the College of Nursing, Ltd., is a danger to the independence of working nurses; and (3) that the British Women's Hospital Committee has made the appeal for charity for the Nation's Nurses, in opposition to their earnestly expressed wishes that they should not be so humiliated.

These are three good reasons why the public should withhold money, every penny of which the nursing profession considers should now be spent in aid of heroic men, many of them sick and wounded unto death; starving and homeless women and children whose countries have been devastated by fire and sword, and in speedily winning the war, which adds daily to the great army of martyrs.

The connection of the College of Nursing with state registration is echoed again in the October number of *Una* (which has made its journey to us from Australia in two months' time), where Miss Eden and Miss Rimmer, of the National Union of Trained Nurses (England), give excellent statements of the point of view of organized nurses.

As we have begun criticising our allies, let us say very frankly right here that the colorless, neutral attitude of the Australian nursing journals on this very vital question in British nursing affairs seems to us quite inexplicable, and quite seriously wrong. The Australian nurses certainly have principles on such subjects; their journals must certainly hold a policy. Why, then, do they not express their policy, assert their standards, in behalf of their English sisters, and give them moral support? It is really sadly weak, in our opinion, to read in a professional journal that it makes no comment on so serious a point of professional current history, but "gives both sides." To give both sides would be only right and proper if an editorial judgment followed, but when no comment is made one cannot avoid a feeling of disappointment.

THRIFT STAMPS

It is pointed out by the Treasury Department that Thrift Stamps are not made redeemable in cash for the reason that these stamps are simply intended as a convenient method for the small savers to accumulate enough to purchase War Savings Stamps, which bear interest and are redeemable in cash.

In addition, to provide for redemption for these Thrift Stamps would involve such an amount of detailed accounting and labor and expense as to impair the practicability of their use. In fact, they would be more trouble and expense to the Government possibly than they are worth.